

“GREEN SHEET”

Meeting: June 5 - 6, 2009

Agenda Item: Adoption: Hunter Education Training Program Requirements

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Presented By: Bruce Bjork, Chief, Enforcement Program

Background:

The current language in WAC 232-12-227(4) allows hunting license purchasers to present either a hunter education certificate or a previous Washington hunting license as evidence that the purchaser is authorized to obtain a new Washington hunting license. This provision has caused considerable confusion at the dealer level because sometimes there is no evidence that a license purchaser lawfully obtained his or her initial license or is lawfully exempt from the hunter education training requirements established in RCW 77.32.155.

The provision was originally a valuable customer service concession when RCW 77.32.155 changed in the mid-1990s. However, the hard-copy license records issued prior to 2001 do not always contain sufficient information to determine whether a license-holder was lawfully entitled to purchase the original license document.

The proposed changes to WAC 232-12-227 will help ensure that the only individuals who are eligible to purchase hunting licenses are those who: (1) were born prior to January 1, 1972; (2) are past or future hunter education graduates; or (3) are hunting license holders currently in the department's licensing data system with a valid hunter education certificate number.

Policy Issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

Does the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission want to replace problematic hunting-license requirements with more stringent, straight-forward requirements?

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

WDFW briefed the Commission and took public comment on this rule change as part of the 3-year hunting-package presentation at the March 2009 meeting. Information about the change also was on the department's Web site through the Wildlife Program, asking for public comment.

Normally staff would have requested adoption of these rule changes in April, along with the rest of the 3-year hunting-package. However, Senate Bill 5008, which was active during the 2009 legislative session, provided an exclusion for military members. Therefore, the department withdrew its request for adoption until the status of SB 5008 was known.

On April 29, 2009, Governor Gregoire signed SB 5008 into law. The bill authorizes a waiver for members of the U.S. military from the skills-portion of WDFW's online hunter education training course. The new law takes effect on July 26, 2009, but as enacted, it will not have any impact on

license vendors since there is no complete waiver of the hunter education training requirement.

Action requested (identify the specific Commission decisions you are seeking):

Adopt WAC 232-12-227, Hunter education training program requirements.

Draft motion language:

"I move to adopt WAC 232-12-227, as proposed."

Justification for Commission action:

The proposed changes will allow license purchases only by individuals who: (1) were born prior to January 1, 1972; (2) are past or future hunter education graduates; or (3) are hunting license holders currently in the department's licensing data system with a valid hunter education certificate number. These limitations will eliminate confusion at the dealer level because they will weed out potential purchasers who have no evidence that they lawfully obtained their initial license or are lawfully exempt from the hunter education training requirements established in RCW 77.32.155.

Communications plan:

The department will explain the changes to WAC 232-12-227 on its Web site and on the Enforcement Program's Web page. The department will also coordinate with Public Affairs to issue a press release.
